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Letter dated 28 September 2009 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to enclose herewith the text of the written statement of the delegation of the United Kingdom in exercise of the right of reply to the remarks made by His Excellency Mr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, Prime Minister of Mauritius, on 25 September 2009 in the General Assembly (see annex).

I should be most grateful if you could arrange to have the text of the present letter and the annexed statement circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 8.

(*Signed*) John **Sawers**

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Annex to the letter dated 28 September 2009 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Statement of the delegation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in exercise of the right of reply to the remarks made by the Prime Minister of Mauritius in the general debate on 25 September 2009

The British Government maintains that the British Indian Ocean Territory is British and has been since 1814. It does not recognize the sovereignty claim of the Mauritian Government.

However, the British Government has recognized Mauritius has the only State which has a right to assert a claim of sovereignty when the United Kingdom relinquishes its own sovereignty.

Successive British Governments have given undertakings to the Government of Mauritius that the Territory will be ceded when no longer required for defence purposes.

The British Government remains open to discussions regarding arrangements governing the British Indian Ocean Territory or the future of the Territory. The British Government has stated that when the time comes for the Territory to be ceded it will liaise closely with the Government of Mauritius.

During recent meetings, British and Mauritian officials discussed the latest legal and policy developments relating to the British Indian Ocean Territory. Both delegations set out their respective positions on sovereignty. The United Kingdom also set out its need to abide by its treaty obligations with the United States and its ongoing need of the British Indian Ocean Territory for defence purposes. There was mutual discussion of fishing rights, the environment, the continental shelf and future visits to the Territory by Chagossians.

The British Government values its close and constructive cooperation with the Government of Mauritius on a wide range of issues and looks forward to this continuing.